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The CASE of the  
**Church of England**  
By Law Established,

Necessary to be considered, in Order to a more  
firm and full Settlement of Peace both at  
Home and Abroad.

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*In a Letter to a Bishop of the present Constitution, by an English Catholick.*

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*My LORD,*

**W**HEN you desired to discourse with me, I was very glad of it; for I know none of your Order I should more gladly have discoursed with than your self: But my Expectations were greatly disappointed, when after I had walked more than five Miles for that purpose, you first permitted much of my time to be lost by ordinary Discourse, not so much as of any Business; and, at last, as soon as I moved any thing towards it, took such occasion to prevent any farther Proceedings in Conference, either then, or at any time else, as looked as if you in truth declined what you before seemed to desire. I expected to have received from you the Subject of our Discourse; but since you was not pleased to vouchsafe me that Favour, I shall to you, and (for reasons which will appear hereafter) to all, give a plain Account of what I think may reasonably be expected from me.

I have from my Youth been disposed to Retirement, and yet for all that always so heartily affected to the Service of God and my Country, that upon any just Occasion I have been as ready to appear in Publick as any, and without any respect to any private Interest. This is manifest by what I have Printed since the Revolution, (not to mention

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other Matters:) And soon after I had received my *Quietus* from that Service, (as I apprehended it) I was, by a *Secret Conduct* of Providence, engaged in another, which had been much in my Heart for many Years, for the more immediate Service of our Great Sovereign; and, by several Steps unforeseen by any Mortal, necessitated to enter into the *most Sacred Employment*, unless I would desert that Service, and let it fall; and to proceed from a private Room to a publick Church, and from one to another, till I and my little Company were brought into the very *Heart of the City*: and then I began to be more sensible of the Divine Hand in it, and what our Business was; *viz.* to bear a Publick, but tacit *Testimony* against the Corruptions and Neglect of the *most Solemn part of the Christian Worship*. And that I continued for above *Two Years* daily with a *Liturgy* restored in the principal Matters to the Primitive Integrity, which I printed, and presented to the Arch Bishop, and Bishop of London, and others, and let it be published; and in the Preface gave sufficient *Admonition* of those Faults I have mentioned. But when I found it so neglected by those, who were most obliged to take Notice of it, I began to fear it might be but the Exposing of so Sacred a thing to Contempt, if we continued in that publick manner; yet did not think fit to desert that Post till I had either a Prohibition to proceed, or an *Invitation* to depart to some other Station; and such I soon had, a very extraordinary one, to a very *convenient Retirement*. After I came thither, the *Scandals* I had before received from the Unfaithfulness, Tepidity, and Unconcernedness of such, as of all men I thought most obliged to take Care of the Service of God, and the Peace and Welfare of the Nation, were softened by Letters I received from London recalled to my Remembrance, that at last I resolved upon a farther and more exact *Review of what is called the Reformation*, which seems to have been the special Business of that Retirement. When I had satisfied my self in that matter, I gave a plain Account of the things of most Importance, both to the State, and to the Church, which I had observed, to Two of His Majesty's Privy-Council, and resolved for my self to do what I could to extricate my self out of all that Guilt and Wickedness I found this Nation involved in, and to make my own Cause good, whatever others would do: And for that purpose I could not think of any Expedient more proper, than to draw up a plain *Profession of my Faith*, and to make an Offer thereof, and of *Communion* to the next Catholick Church, which I take to be that of

of France; and a little kind of Overture I then made of it to a private Friend in *London*. When I had done this, we soon had *Occasion* to think of removing thence, and upon our Removal, Opportunity to make some stay at *Oxford*, and to peruse what Books and Manuscripts I thought fit there; and when I had done that, a fair *Invitation* to come nearer *London*. And then I thought fit to write to the Bishop of the Diocese whence I came, and where I was concerned, to the Bishop of the Diocese to which I came, and to the Arch-Bishop of the Province, concerning these matters, who were all I thought my self obliged to for any account of what I did; but I desired an Opportunity to represent them to a Synod: For I could not satisfy my self to secure my own Interest, unless I did what I could for the Service of my Countrey also, especially since we have a Peace so happily concluded by so many States, without any great Danger of any thing than what is like to be revived by Dissentions in the Church, and the secret Guilt of Sacrilege and Schism, both in this and other Nations. And therefore when I found no hopes of any Opportunity of representing these matters before the Church Collective in a Synod, there was no other way for me of doing it at all but before the Church Diffusive by the Press. And for divers Reasons I thought nothing more proper to begin with than a Discourse of *Prayers for the Dead*, with a Preface concerning the Necessity and Advantage of a Review of these matters by the State, since the present Governours of the Church would not trouble themselves about them. And this, my Lord, I hope, will fully answer part of your mistake concerning me. I shall next tell you plainly, What were the *Scandals* which principally moved me to this Review, so far as is sufficient for my purpose; and then, What were the principal *Matters* which I *observed* in it, and think most necessary for a farther Consideration at present.

Of those *Scandals*, there is one of which I have long since, and often complained, both in private and publick, but with so little Success, as doth not a little aggravate the Sin and Scandal to me: It is, that, having so great Encouragement for Learning, such Numbers of Learned Men, such Abundance of Shipping, and all Necessaries, such Commerce, Footing, and Plantations in so many Foreign Parts among Infidels, there hath been no Care taken by the Governours of this Reformed Church for the *Propagation of Religion* among the Infidels, or the Promotion of sincere Piety in our own Planta-

tions, but, instead of sending Missioners of the Gospel, suffering them to be filled with the Ministers of Satan, the most scandalous People of the Nation; and for Relief of the poor *Negroes*, whom their worse than Infidel Masters will not suffer to be instructed in Christianity, and to be baptized, least they should lose their Service, not so much as a Bill brought in, or one Motion made in Parliament, where they sit, and are many times as busie, as Solicitors, in private Cases of temporal Concern.

This is not a little aggravated by the cold Entertainment which Doctor *Bray's* good *Proposal* had in this Nation, not only among the Gentry and People in the Country, but among the Citizens and Traders, and even those very Persons who approved and recommended it to the Charitable Contributions of others; and after it had been thus sent on begging for so inconsiderable a Sum as *Three Thousand Pounds*, which was as much as it required, has been held in Suspence for some Years before it could be raised, if it be raised yet. And this, if I mistake not, is the greatest matter that ever was attempted by any of this Church. What Multitudes of Souls must have died in Ignorance and Infidelity, and in scandalous Sins, through the Unfaithfulness and Neglect of this Glorious Reformed Church? Can any Man in great Place in this Church think of this without Horror and Amazement for the Account they must one day give for it, if they have any thing of true and sincere Christianity in them? Could such a Man reproach another for commending *Xavier*, or so much as think of that glorious Saint, his admirable Virtues and Works, confessed and commended even by Protestants themselves, and not be confounded at the Thought of it? Are not he, and many others of the *Popes Missioners*, the Shame and Reproach of such Persons, and of such a Reformation, in this World, and like to rise up in Judgment against them in the next? And who can believe that such a Reformation as this was of God, or is indowed with an Apostolical Spirit?

I need not mention *Particulars* of the like Unfaithfulness and Neglect at home: If *publick Records* be examined, and the Good promoted, or but proposed in Parliament by this Order be compared with what they have hindered or opposed, I doubt it will be found upon Record that this Reformed Order have been very insignificant Instruments for the Good of the Nation, if not much more instrumental to hinder it. But we need not be at so much trouble as that of Searching Records; if the *visible State of the Nation* be

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considered, it is manifest and undeniable of what Communion the most Scandalous part of the Nation are, and under whose Discipline, if that may be called Discipline, which was once wished, 140 years since, but never practised to this day. Another great part of the Nation, who have little more of Religion than a bare Profession, and going to Church on Sundays, such as the greatest part of most Country Parishes in England are, are of the same Communion, and under the Care and Instruction of the same Persons. And if we enquire into the Occasions of so great Increase of *Atheism, Deism, and Infidelity*, I have not in 30 years last past discovered any more common and effectual, than the Scandal of the Unconcernedness of the Clergy for the Promotion of the Religion they profess, and their eager pursuit of their own Promotion and Preferment in the Church. Nor do I think there is any more common and effectual Occasion of so great numbers of *Dissenters*, than that Coldness, Formality, and Emptiness of a true Spiritual Life and Power which they observed in the Generality of the Clergy, of all Ranks and Degrees; and thereupon wander to seek for it where they can find it. For there is a certain *Spiritual Sensation*, as a learned Man of your own calls it, by which devout experienced Souls can perceive such a secret Power and Life in some Persons and Books, as that of the Imitation of Christ, which have but a mean, simple, outward Appearance, as they perceive to be really wanting in others sufficiently furnished with Learning and Humane Reason to recommend them to those, whose Religion is more superficial or notional. And such I believe are many among the Dissenters, who would never have sought for what they wanted abroad, if they could have found it at home.

Besides all this, there is another very notorious, which I shall not mention here, having a more special Occasion to take notice of it presently: and I shall but mention what was not a little Scandalous to me, because not so notorious to others; the obstinate and wilful Neglect of these two great Parts of our Religion, the *Peculiar Solemnity of the Worship*, (of which I have said enough in the Preface to the Liturgy) and of the *Discipline*.

These things, I presume, will not be denied to be sufficient Motives to a considerate Man to examine the Root of a Religion, which brings forth such Fruits: and now I shall tell you (not all that I observed in my Review; that would be too much for what I now design, but) so much as is necessary and sufficient for the  
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Conclusions I make upon it. *Three things*, I believe, will go near to determine all Questions needful concerning the Reformation: What were the Causes, for which? What the Authority, by which, it was done? And what the Fruits and Effects? Of the moving Causes enough is said for the present in the late *Letter and Answer to the Young-Man*, p. 2, 3. And much of the Fruits I have here noted already; but there is one so natural to the Root, and so remarkable, and of so spreading and pestiferous a nature, that I thought fit to reserve the mentioning of it for this place.

\* In the Charters were the Rights of the People invaded; in the Ecclesiastical Commissions the Rights of the Church also. It was touching the *Accursed* thing.

† Both the *Usurpation* and the *Oath of Supremacy* seem Heretical, Sacrilegious, Schismatical, and Perjury, to cause Flattery in the Clergy, subvert the Laws, justify *King James*, and be a Reproach to the present Government: and not excused, but aggravated by *Queen Elizabeth's* Injunction.

The very Root of the present Reformation, which was at last Established by Act of Parliament, 1 *Eliz.* c. 1. was *Cranmer*, from whom the Consecrators of *Matt. Parker*, the Principal of the present Succession of Legal Bishops in this Nation, received their Authority; so that he is the *Common Ancestor* of all. What his Principles were, and to what Excesses his Flattery of the Civil Magistrate proceeded, may be seen in the late *Abstract of the Vindication of the Rights of the Church*, c. 8. even to the betraying of those Sacred and Divine Rights, and censuring even the Apostles themselves: And it is no wonder if from such an Ancestor, and such Principles, have proceeded a Progeny of Flatterers of Princes for their own temporal Interest, to the Disturbance of all mutual Confidence between them and the People, and Destruction of whole Royal Families. For this, tho' notorious before, we need look no farther than the last of the second Race of Kings since the Reformation, plainly betrayed into those illegal Actions (justifiable indeed by those Principles, but not by the Fundamental Laws of the *English* Government) which are the \*principal things evident against him, by those false Principles, and the deceitful Flattery of such as preached up and pretended as much to Loyalty, Non-resistance, and passive Obedience, as any; but soon discovered what was in the bottom of those Pretences when there was occasion. But admirable is the *Providence of God*, who hath not only given us at last occasion to see the *Deceitfulness and Treacherousness* of those Principles; and brought things to that State, that neither can *King James* excuse his Actions, but by those Principles, which yet he hath special reason to abhor; nor *King William* and the Nation justify theirs, but by †disowning and disclaiming those, and asserting and adhering to those of the true *English* Government; but besides, by a new Division and Contention in the Church, hath extorted a just Assertion of that Truth, (with a plain Conviction of the contrary Heresie)

refie ) which few or none before would so much as own or confess. The *Erastian Heresie* you know I mean; and the Conviction may be seen in the *Abstract*. But no Conviction, tho' never so clear, will ever free this Nation from a continual Succession of such a pestiferous Brood, till the State it self cast out the accursed thing, which that Sacrilegious, Treacherous *Achan* brought into it. And such it is indeed; for if his Principles be *Heresie*, the Practice in the State is certainly *Sacrilege*, and *Sacrilege* of no ordinary Nature or degree. And how cursed a thing that is may be seen in Sir *Henry Spelman's* two Treatises, one but lately printed. Such cursed Fruit proceeding from this Root, all may see, and many have felt, and more may, if they take not warning.

The *Authority* by which this Reformation was Established, as aforesaid, was meerly and intirely Lay: the Bishops in the House made Speeches against it; the Convocation of the Clergy sent up a Remonstrance against it; and the Universities declared against it. This Authority therefore was incompetent; and that *Authority*, which by it was introduced into the Church, when the other Bishops were turned out, *Schismatical*, and null; and besides, meerly *Political*, even in its Original, (as is briefly noted in the *Letter to the Vindicator*) and nothing truly Apostolical in it: for that *Cranmer* had implicitly renounced and disowned, and wickedly, heretically, and treacherously introduced one meerly *Political* into the Church in the place of it, by his \* *strange Project of Commissions*; and the † *Consecrators of Mat. Parker* were both Intruders and Commission-Officers, and such as the Queen would not make use of in her Coronation, tho' she was hard put to it to get any other. Nor has this *Fundamental Fault* ever been rectified, tho' there was once a fair Opportunity, by a true *Arch-Bishop* some time resident in the Nation, had the Opportunity been wisely improved, and the Person treated as his real Dignity and great Learning justly deserved. So that you have neither any clear *Commission* from Christ, nor *Unity* with the *Catholick Church*, nor Integrity of his *Worship*, nor Authority or Use of his *Discipline*, nor Evidence or any Demonstration of the Prefence or Power of his *Spirit*: And in all these the *Dissenters* seem to be equal with you, or in a better and safer Condition; and tho' || guilty of Schism too, yet more innocently guilty, and more cordial and industrious for promoting the Spirit and Power of Religion in the Nation, which may be accepted in Mitigation of the Guilt, especially if after notice they proceed cautiously, and presume not beyond.

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\* This the History of the Reformation falsely charges upon Bonner, who was not so much as Bishop then. † They both accepted Commissions, and were consecrated (if at all) by such as had. || They betray not the Rights of Christ's Kingdom; their Separation is from Schismatics; their Non-observance of Humane Laws for Observance of Divine, and justifiable or excusable by the Principles of their Adversaries. v. *Hammond of Schism*, c. 2. §. 5, 7.

yond their Authority, and such things as are lawful and commendable in all Christians, as Prayer, and Instruction of their Neighbours, if done in due manner. And this I think sufficient for the present to justify to a Man of Learning and Understanding in these matters, both my refusal of your Communion, and what I told you I am ready to answer for in my Preface to the Discourse Of Prayers for the Dead. And if this be not enough, more I have to say.

These things I was willing to have discoursed with your Lordship in private, but, it seems, it was not the Will of God that I should, but rather offer them publickly to the Consideration of all. Nor do I see any Inconvenience at all in it: For if I be mistaken in any thing, I shall be glad to be better informed, and as concerned and careful to do right to the Truth, as any one concerned can desire. But if these things be so, as I have said, certainly they are not to be neglected; nor can any Man, who has any Sense of his Duty to God, or any Love to his Country, see it in such a Case, and be silent, or not so much as give Notice to all, and especially to such as are obliged to take care, not only of themselves, but of the rest also. Nor can Your Lordship, or any of Your Order, be offended at it, if it be truth: for if so, it is in effect but what you your selves ought to do, as you will answer it to Almighty God. If your Prince and the State be guilty of *Sacrilege*, by Usurping the Sacred Rights of the Church, you ought to admonish them, to persuade them, to oppose and withstand it, and not to comply with it: for that is to make your selves Partakers in the Sin, to betray their Souls, and your own too. If all be guilty of *Schism*, you ought to consider how \* great a Sin that is, give Warning, advise what is to be done, and not conceal so great an Evil, either for your own private Interest, or for the sake of a Party: that is to let them die in their Sin, and their Blood be required of you, over and besides your own Personal Guilt. If the Authority of *Christ's Commission* be not duly and sufficiently conveyed to you, you ought not to pretend to any such thing, or to act as if it was; *that is*, to counterfeit your Sovereign's Commission, to be Impostors, and the greatest Cheats and Deceivers that can be. And all this is no less a Sin than that great Sin of disowning Christ, and his Word, being ashamed or afraid to attest it; but rather so much greater, by how much the Temptation is lesser. So that it is a matter which deserves as great Consideration as any in the World; and not to be resolved but upon very great and clear Grounds and Reasons. And if you your selves will not be sensible of it, others ought, at least every one for themselves. And so I leave it. F I N I S.

\* Bp. Brambell acknowledges Separation from the Catholic Church to be Separation from Christ, and all his holy Ordinances, and from the Benefit of his Passion, and all Hope of Salvation.

*Vindic.* c. 9. p. 126. v. Hammond of Schism, c. 1. *Seet* 3. 67. 8. Stillington's Fleet of Separation *Par. 2. Seet* 27. 28. Dodwell of Schism, c. 13. 14. Abitract, c. 4. p. 16.

Ed. Stephens  
1699



